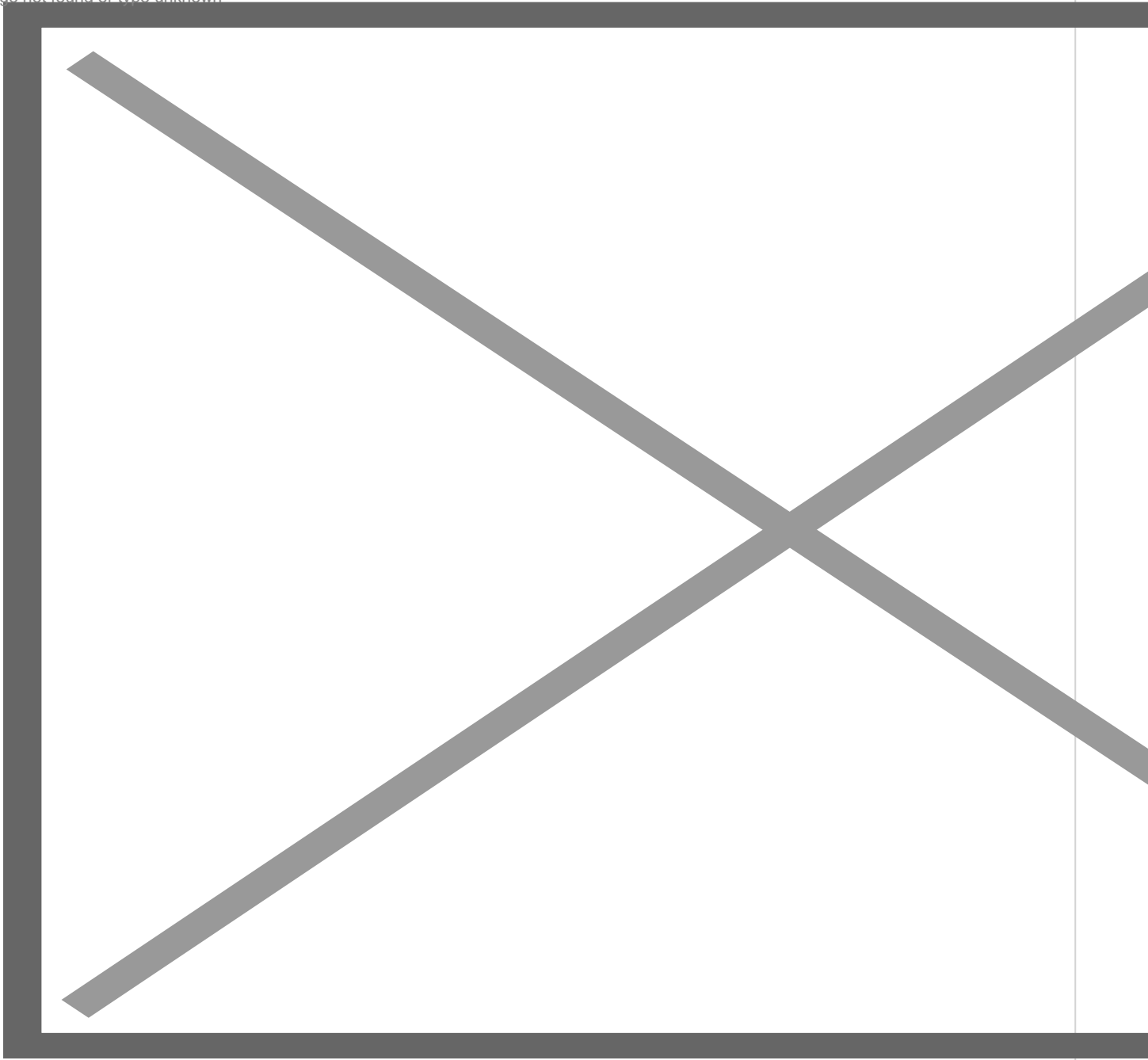


*European Union official urges
bans on Israeli ministers over war
crimes incitement*

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Israel's national security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir (L) and finance minister Bezalel Smotrich

Brussels, August 13 (RHC)-- The European Union foreign policy chief says the bloc should consider sanctioning far-right Israeli ministers Itamar Ben Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich, after they said aid to Gaza should be blocked and the starvation of two million people in the territory could be justified.

Israel's so-called national security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir said in a post on social media platform X on Sunday that the transfer of humanitarian aid and fuel to the Gaza Strip should be stopped “until all our captives” held by Hamas are released.

In the same post, Ben-Gvir also called for the permanent occupation of Gaza. His comments after Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said last week that he believes blocking humanitarian aid to Gaza is “justified and moral” even if it causes two million civilians to die of hunger in the coastal Palestinian sliver.

“While the world pushes for a ceasefire in Gaza, Ben-Gvir calls for cutting fuel and aid to civilians. Like Smotrich's sinister statements, this is an incitement to war crimes,” Borrell wrote on X late on Sunday, saying “sanctions must be on our EU agenda.”

His call comes as an increasing number of states have threatened to impose sanctions on senior Israeli officials over their conduct during the Gaza war.

Ben-Gvir and Smotrich are considered to be among the ministers most likely to face sanctions. They are high-ranking Israeli figures on the furthest fringes of the Tel Aviv regime’s settlement expansion plans, and continue to advocate more land grabs in the occupied Palestinian territories. Both ministers oppose a ceasefire in Gaza as well.

Israel has killed more than 39,800 Palestinians, mostly women and children, in Gaza since October, according to the Gaza-based health ministry.

The occupying entity has also imposed a “complete siege” on the territory, cutting off fuel, electricity, food, and water to the more than two million Palestinians living there.

Israel stands accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice, whose latest ruling ordered it to immediately halt its military operation in Rafah, where over a million Palestinians had sought refuge from the war before it was invaded on May 6th.

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